



The American Revolution

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American Revolution Vocabulary

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| 2. Treaty of Paris (1763) | 19. Continental Army |
| 3. Sugar Act | 20. Patriot |
| 4. Stamp Act | 21. Loyalist |
| 5. Petition | 22. Blockade |
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| 8. Townshend Act | 25. Declaration of Independence |
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| 17. Battles of Lexington and Concord | 34. Treaty of Paris (1783) |
| | 35. Ratify |

NOTES

Background to the American Revolution

The French and Indian War

A. Background of the War

1. England and France were competing with each other for:
 - a. Colonies (land)
 - b. Trade (Money)
 - c. Spreading religion
2. This rivalry between France & England led to war in both Europe and the Americas.
3. The war between England and France in the Americas is known as the French and Indian War
 - a. The war pitted the British, their colonists, and Native American allies against the French and their Native American allies

B. The War

1. The French and Indian War lasted for 9 years (1754-1763).
2. The war was fought because English settlers were moving into the Ohio River valley which was claimed by France.
3. Even with British help the colonies would need to work together to defeat the French.
 - a. Benjamin Franklin's "Join or Die"
4. The first shots of the war were fired by soldiers commanded by a young, 22 year old British officer named George Washington
5. The war was brought to an end by the Treaty of Paris, 1763.
 - a. The Treaty of Paris 1763 forced France to surrender Canada and all land east of the Mississippi River to England

C. Effects of the French and Indian War

1. Due to the war, Great Britain's national debt nearly doubled.
 - a. England wanted the colonies to help pay off the debt
 - b. England's Parliament passed a series of taxes to raise money from the colonies
 1. The Sugar Act: Taxed molasses
 2. The Stamp Act: Taxed paper products
 3. The Townshend Acts: Taxed everyday items like paint, lead, glass and tea
 4. The Tea Act

- c. Colonists resented the taxes
 - 1. Colonists felt that because they could not elect representation to England's Parliament, Parliament should not be able to tax them
 - 2. Groups like the Sons of Liberty and Daughters of Liberty organized colonial protests.
 - a. Signed petitions
 - b. Organized boycotts
 - c. Committees of Correspondence
 - d. Boston Massacre
 - e. Boston Tea Party
 - 3. In response to the Boston Tea Party and other protests, England passed a new series of taxes that the colonists called the Intolerable Acts.
 - a. The Intolerable Acts:
 - i. Closed the port of Boston
 - ii. Outlawed town meetings
 - iii. Gave customs officials more power to search cargo ships
 - iv. Passed a Quartering Act
 - 4. The Other colonies support Boston
 - a. September of 1774, colonial leaders called a meeting in Philadelphia
 - b. Delegates from 12 of the 13 colonies meet to decide what to do about the situation in Massachusetts.
 - c. Decided on two courses of action:
 - i. Each colony agreed to boycott all British goods and agreed to stop shipping good to Britain until the acts were repealed
 - ii. Advised all colonies to set up and train a militia
 - 5. In Massachusetts, colonists already prepared to resist.
 - a. Sons of Liberty stockpiled weapons in the town of Concord about 18 miles northwest of Boston.

- b. Before dawn on April 18th, 1775 the British sent 700 troops to seize the stockpiled weapons and arrest members of the Sons of Liberty.
 - i. Paul Revere and others rode ahead to warn that the British were on their way.
- c. The British skirmished with minutemen at the town of Lexington on the way to Concord.
- d. When the British reached Concord the weapons had been moved.
- e. Militia shot at the British from behind trees and walls as they marched back to Boston
 - i. 73 were killed and over 200 were wounded or missing.
- f. These shots became known as “the shot heard round the world” and mark the beginning of the American Revolution

The American Revolution

The War Begins

- A. News about the events of Lexington and Concord spread
 - 1. 15,000 militia members from all over the colonies surrounded the British and trapped them in Boston.
 - 2. A 2nd Continental Congress was called to decide what to do.
 - a. 2nd Continental Congress accomplished 2 things:
 - i. Sent the Olive Branch Petition to King George III professing the loyalty of the colonies
 - ii. Created the Continental Army
 - 1. This united the militia around Boston and placed them under the command of one person
 - 2. George Washington was unanimously selected to lead the Continental Army
- B. In the early days of the war many colonists were undecided about which side to support.
 - 1. Roughly 1/3 of colonists were patriots and supported fighting for independence.
 - 2. Roughly 1/3 of colonists were loyalists and wanted to remain loyal to England.
 - 3. Roughly 1/3 of colonists were undecided about which side they should support.
- C. Advantages of Each Army
 - 1. The British Army
 - a. Experienced
 - b. Well Supplied
 - c. Supported by the best Navy on earth
 - 2. The Continental Army
 - a. Motivated
 - b. Knew their surroundings
 - c. Rifles
 - d. Excellent Commanders

Key Battles/Events of the War

A. Many key events took place throughout the course of the war. Key events are ones that are crucial in deciding the war's outcome. Several key battles and events are located below.

1. Fort Ticonderoga

- i. Ft. Ticonderoga was a British fort located on the New York side of Lake Champlain
- ii. Ticonderoga had many cannons that were used to control trade on the lake
- iii. Vermont blacksmith Ethan Allen lead a group of militia known as the Green Mountain Boys on an attack to seize the fort and its cannons.
 - 1. Ft. Ticonderoga was captured without ever firing a shot.
 - 2. Its cannons were captured and sent to Boston

2. Battle of Bunker Hill

- i. After Lexington & Concord, militia from all over the colonies surrounded the British and trapped them in Boston.
- ii. Colonial militia took control of Bunker and Breeds Hills located across the river from Boston
 - 1. From Bunker and Breeds Hills the colonists could fire on British ships in Boston Harbor.
- iii. British General William Howe ordered his men to capture Bunker and Breeds hills from the colonists.
 - 1. Howe's men charged up Bunker hill 3 times before they captured it
 - 2. The British lost over 1,000 soldiers while the colonists lost only about 400
- iv. While Bunker Hill was technically a defeat for the colonists, it proved to many that the colonists could fight bravely and would not be easily defeated.

3. The Declaration of Independence

- i. In late 1775, after months of fighting, 1/3 of colonists were still unsure whether or not they should separate from England
- ii. It wasn't until January of 1776, after Thomas Paine published a fiery pamphlet titled *Common Sense* until colonists were convinced that "tis time to part" from England
 1. *Common Sense* sold 500,000+ copies in 6 months
 2. *Common Sense* convinced many colonists that:
 - a. Since colonists could not elect representatives to England's Parliament, England did not have the right to make laws for or tax the 13 colonies.
 - b. If England had helped the colonies, it was only for its own profit
 - c. The idea of having a king/queen was wrong
 - d. No colonist owed loyalty to a king/queen
 3. *Common Sense* convinced many of the 1/3 undecided colonists that it was time to break away from England.
- iii. In June of 1776, the 2nd Continental Congress appointed a committee to write a document declaring the 13 colonies independence from England.
 1. The committee included John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Robert Livingston and Roger Sherman
 2. The committee asked Thomas Jefferson to write the declaration.
- iv. July 2nd 1776, the 2nd Continental Congress voted to declare that the 13 Colonies were a free and independent nation.
- v. On the evening of July 4th 1776, the 2nd Continental Congress officially adopted Jefferson's Declaration of Independence
 1. President of the 2nd Continental Congress, John Hancock, signed first.
 2. Copies of the Declaration were printed and distributed throughout the colonies.

vi. Format of the Declaration of Independence.

1. 4 Parts

a. Preamble

i. Introduction

b. Natural Rights

i. All people have natural rights

ii. Given at birth

iii. Given by God, NOT the king of England

iv. Natural rights include, but are not limited to the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness

c. British Wrongs

i. Outlines a list of wrongdoings committed by King George III

ii. Outlines the ways King George III violated the colonists natural rights

1. Taxation without representation, Quartering Act, etc...

d. Conclusion

i. The conclusion of the Declaration stated that since the colonists have natural rights that were given to them by God, and Britain and the King of England violated their natural rights, they have the write to brake away from England and become a free and independent nation.

4. Battles of Trenton and Princeton

- i. After Ticonderoga & Boston the Continental Army suffered a string of defeats that left the fate of the revolution in doubt
- ii. Washington needed a victory to raise moral
- iii. On Christmas eve Washington decided to launch a sneak attack on the Hessian troops guarding the town of Trenton
 - 1. At midnight Washington & his army crossed the Delaware River from Pa into NJ.
 - 2. At 8am Christmas morning Washington's army caught the Hessians off guard & a short battle ensued.

- a. By 9am 22 Hessians were dead and over 1,000 captured
 - b. Washington also defeated a smaller British force at Princeton soon after
- iv. The Battles of Trenton & Princeton gave Americans new hope that the revolution might succeed

5. Battle of Saratoga

- i. The Continental Army was in desperate need to new troops and supplies.
- ii. European countries were reluctant to help the Continental army because they doubted whether or not they could actually win the war.
- iii. At the battle of Saratoga the Continental Army beat British forces under the command of General John Burgoyne.
- iv. The battle of Saratoga was a turning point in the war. It gave European countries proof that the Continental Army could beat the British in a major battle.
 - 1. France became allies with the United States
 - a. France donated money, supplies, troops and the use of its navy

6. Winter at Valley Forge

- i. During the winter of 1777-78, the Continental Army had to make a makeshift camp outside of Philadelphia
- ii. The conditions at Valley Forge were terrible
 - 1. Winter was harsh and cold
 - 2. Overcrowded
 - 3. Lack of shelter
 - 4. Disease
 - 5. Hunger
 - 6. Frostbite
 - a. Volunteers from around the colonies arrived to help.
 - i. Ex: the Daughters of Liberty

- iii. Arrival of supplies, better weather and help from Europe brought relief.
 - 1. Baron von Steuban
 - a. From Prussia
 - b. Taught the army to march and fight
- iv. Effects of the Winter at Valley Forge
 - 1. Brought the army closer together
 - 2. The army would emerge stronger and more disciplined than before

The End of the Revolutionary War

A. The Battle of Yorktown

- a. British General Charles Cornwallis was ordered to march to New York
- b. Instead he marched to Yorktown, VA.
 - i. Yorktown is on a peninsula
 - ii. Cornwallis was hoping the British navy could resupply his troops from the sea
- c. Washington trapped Cornwallis on the peninsula
 - i. The French navy blocked the British from escaping by sea
 - ii. Washington laid siege to Yorktown for weeks
 - iii. On October 19, 1781, Cornwallis surrendered to Washington
 - iv. This marked the end of fighting in the Revolutionary War

B. The Treaty of Paris, 1783

- a. Both England and the United States sent delegates to Paris to draw up a peace treaty
 - i. Among others, the U.S. sent Benjamin Franklin and John Adams
 - ii. An agreement was reached and the treaty was ratified on April 15, 1783
- iii. The Treaty of Paris accomplished the following:
 - 1. England had to recognize the U.S. as an independent nation

2. Set the U.S. borders at The Atlantic Ocean (East), the Mississippi river (West), the Great Lakes (North) and Florida (South).

Effects of the American Revolution

- A. The World Turned Upside Down
 - a. The birth of a nation
 - b. Toppling of a superpower
 - i. England would never regain air of invincibility
 - c. The Revolution would serve as an inspiration to others all around the world
 - i. Ex: The French Revolutions
 - d. The world was watching to see if a democracy such as ours could really work...

Resources